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U. S. Department of Agriculture  
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9  
23 Hh  
Housekeepers' Chat

NOT FOR PUBLICATION.

Subject: "A Home-made Furniture Polish." Program includes questions and answers, menu, and recipe. Approved by Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletins available: "Floors and Floor Coverings."

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I've been cleaning house this week, making curtains, and re-covering cushions. You'd be surprised, how much more cheerful the living room looks, with fresh curtains. Of course the fern has a lot to do with it. Uncle Ebenezer bought me a Boston fern. He says a Boston fern is one plant which will endure much hard treatment, and still survive. Not that I intend to give the fern hard treatment, but you know how hard it is to keep most house plants in hot, dry, living rooms. The heat causes flabby leaves on plants which soon curl and die. Dry air makes the danger of wilting common.

W. R. B., the garden adviser, gave me some rules for the care of plants. He says to beware of gas, the fumes from burning gas, as from gas jets or a gas stove, and the more disagreeable but less injurious gas from a coal range or furnace. No plant will stand gas for long.

If your plants are in jardinieres, or other deep receptacles, be sure that the water does not stand in them, for plants can be drowned.

But I must not spend time talking about houseplants, when there are questions to answer, and a menu to broadcast.

First question: "Do you know of a good home-made furniture polish, which is convenient for rubbing up various kinds of woodwork?"

Answer: A simple furniture polish is made by mixing one part of raw linseed oil with two parts of turpentine. Add a little melted beeswax, if you like. Perhaps, I'd better repeat this formula: One part raw linseed oil, two parts turpentine, and a little melted beeswax, if desired.

Next question: "Please tell me how to clean ordinary papered walls and ceilings."

Answer: Ordinary plastered and papered walls and ceilings should be cleaned with a wall brush, or with a broom covered with soft cloth, such as cotton flannel. Use light, overlapping strokes; heavy strokes rub the dirt in. Cotton batting is good for cleaning places that soil more quickly than the



rest, for example, the wall over radiators, registers, and stoves. Rub the wall lightly with the cotton batting, turning it as it becomes soiled.

Third question: "Can calcimined walls be cleaned?"

Answer: I don't believe they can. They can't be washed, or even rubbed with a dry cloth without streaking. It's better to put on another coat of calcimine, rather than to try to clean the wall.

Next: "What is the best way to clean tiling?"

Answer: Tiling may be cleaned by washing with warm, soapy water, rinsing, and drying thoroughly; when necessary, a fine scourer may be used. If water is allowed to remain long on tiling, it is likely to injure the cement in which the tiles are set, and thus to loosen them.

Next: "We have just moved into a new bungalow, which has handsome hardwood floors. The floors are varnished. How can I keep them looking nice?"

Answer: In the regular course of housecleaning, remove the dust from the varnished floors with an oiled mop, or by pinning a damp, soft cloth over an ordinary broom, so that the dust will adhere to it more readily. Be sure, however, to wipe the floor dry, with a dry cloth, immediately after using the damp cloth. If dirt sticks to the floor, use a little lukewarm water and soap, being careful to cleanse this off as quickly as possible, and wipe dry. For removing stains, use a cloth saturated with turpentine, or benzine.

If the finish is dull, after the floor has been thoroughly cleaned, go over it with a cloth moistened slightly with floor oil. Rub the finish, until the luster returns. Be careful not to leave the surface oily, or dust will stick to it, and form a gummy coating.

Here's a question about waxed floors: "Is it all right to use water in cleaning waxed floors?"

Answer: Except in cases where a waxed floor is so badly soiled that it must be refinished, guard against the use of water, or even a damp cloth. It is not advisable to use an ordinary oil mop on waxed floors, either, as the oil forms a coating which holds dirt, and eventually a scum of dirt will form over the wax and be held by the oil.

Next: "Can you tell me how to clean rugs and carpets, and how to mend carpets?"

Instead of answering this question, I'm sending you a copy of "Floors and Floor Coverings." In it you will find answers to all your questions about floors, rugs, carpets, mattings, and so forth.

Time for one more question: "Can you tell me why some egg whites will not get stiff, no matter how long you beat them?"



Answer: In the first place, only fresh eggs will beat up stiff. Stale eggs will not hold the air beaten into them. In the second place, yolks and whites must be separated carefully. Egg whites will not beat up stiff if they contain bits of egg yolk. Chill egg whites thoroughly, and add a pinch of salt, to make them stiffer. You will obtain a larger volume of egg white by using an egg whip, rather than a rotary beater.

I'm ready for the dinner menu now, if you are: Codfish Balls; spinach; Buttered Carrots; Chili Sauce; and Tutti Fruitti Tarts.

The Menu Specialist knows that fish is an important food, and she's clever enough to suggest a dish that all of us can have, whether or not we live near oceans or rivers.

Shall I tell you how to make Codfish Balls? It's very easy. Three ingredients for Codfish Balls:

1½ cups (packed) salt codfish, shredded.  
3 cups mashed potatoes, seasoned with milk and butter, and  
2 eggs.

Only three ingredients, but I'd better repeat them: (Repeat)

Shred the fish, soak in the cold water until freshened, and cook until tender. Place the fish in a double layer of cheesecloth, and press out all the liquid. Mix the cooked codfish, with the hot mashed potatoes, and the well beaten eggs. Beat until light. Drop by spoonfuls into hot deep fat, and fry to a golden brown. Drain on paper, and serve as soon as possible.

The Menu Specialist won't let us neglect our vegetables and fruits, either. Potatoes in the codfish balls, and spinach and carrots besides. Chili sauce to "pep" up the meal, and Tutti Fruitti tarts for dessert.

Tutti Fruitti tarts are pastry shells, with filling of various kinds of left-over cooked fruits -- prunes, apricots, cherries, peaches, plums, and any kind of jam. If you want a "dressy" dessert, add a spoonful of whipped cream, or place a meringue on top of the tarts.

To repeat the menu: Codfish Balls; Spinach; Buttered Carrots; Chili Sauce; and Tutti Fruitti Tarts.

Tomorrow: "Vegetables to Serve with Meats."

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